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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 003077

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [CH](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: UNSC BURMA RESOLUTION

REF: STATE 88973

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Joe Donovan. Reasons:1.4(b/d).

11. (C) Summary: In response to the DCM's demarche urging support for U.S. efforts to pursue a UN Security Council resolution on the situation in Burma, MOFA DVFM Kohno stated:

- Japan shares U.S. concerns over human rights violations and for the lack of progress toward democratic reforms;
- Continued engagement with the Burmese regime is needed to encourage such reform;
- Growing frustration with the situation in Burma has led Japan to consider the need to apply additional pressure on the regime;
- Japan will consider very seriously the U.S. proposal for a UNSC resolution; and
- The Japanese UN Ambassador's recent comments regarding UNSC steps on Burma were not a complete reflection of the Japanese position.

End Summary.

12. (C) On June 5 the DCM conveyed reftel demarche to MOFA Deputy Vice Minister for Foreign Policy Masaharu Kohno. Stressing U.S. disappointment with Japan's statement in the discussion following U/SGY Gambari's briefing on Burma in which Japan opposed any further Council action, the DCM urged Japan to reconsider its position and to support U.S. efforts to pass a resolution on Burma.

Japan Shares U.S. Concerns

13. (C) DVM Kohno stated that he had anticipated the U.S. demarche and had prepared a few points in response. First, Kohno wanted to underscore that Japan shares U.S. concerns for the lack of democracy and for human rights violations in Burma. Particularly troubling, he noted, was the slowness of the political process in moving toward democracy, which has led to Japan's increasing frustration with the situation.

Secondly, Kohno emphasized the importance of continuing engagement with the Burmese regime. The involvement of NGOs, human rights activists, ASEAN, and the UN are all important in the effort to enlighten the Burmese junta on the need for change. In that regard, PM Koizumi had sent a strongly worded message to Burma leader Than Shwe earlier in the year.

Although Japan had not received a response and there had been no tangible progress toward democracy in Burma, Kohno insisted it is important to keep the door open.

Growing Frustration

¶4. (C) Given the lack of progress in Burma, Kohno continued, Japan has come to believe that additional outside pressure may be needed this year. Japan appreciates the U.S. proposal and believes that the time has come for UNSC consideration of the situation in Burma, he stated. Kohno said he had initiated an internal discussion within MOFA on how to deal with Burma and would give the U.S. proposal every consideration. For his own part, Kohno said he is inclined to cooperate with the U.S. approach. However, the long history of close relations between Japan and Burma meant that a number of Japanese political leaders with a strong interest in Burma will have to be consulted. The matter needs to be discussed thoroughly within MOFA and vetted with FM Aso and, likely, also with PM Koizumi. Saying he did not want to mislead the United States, Kohno noted that Japan may eventually determine it could only support a chairman's statement or some form of response other than a resolution, but such a decision would come later. In any event, Japan will take the U.S. proposal very seriously and keep in close

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contact on this issue, he stated.

Need to Take the Right Approach

¶5. (C) Noting that Burmese leaders were especially sensitive to pressure by the international community, Kohno advised against taking an unnecessarily provocative approach at the UNSC. He suggested that given the Burmese leaders' strong antipathy toward opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, associating the proposed UNSC resolution with her birthday would not be efficacious. Kohno said that it was his view that offering some measure of encouragement would be the best way of inducing the regime to move toward the needed reforms.

Ambassador's Comments Not Definitive

¶6. (C) Kohno suggested that Ambassador Kenzo Oshima's statement in the UNSC might have led to a misunderstanding of Japan's position on Burma. Kohno said we should not take Oshima's statement that Burma did not pose a threat to international peace and security as the definitive Japanese position, asserting that Japan would not ignore the many problems posed by the Burmese regime, including transnational problems of disease and crime as well as growing problems with human rights and refugees. Asian Affairs Bureau First Southeast Asia Division Director Hideaki Mizukoshi added that the U.S. proposal had taken Ambassador Oshima by surprise and that he did not have sufficient time to frame a considered response. Without going into detail, Kohno underscored that while Japan might have appeared to line up with China in the Council's May 31 discussion following U/SYG Gambari's briefing, Oshima's comments were of a different nature than China's comments on Burma. He insisted that Japan does not share the PRC position on Burma.

SCHIEFFER